

A TRIBUTE TO STEVENSON.

The Vaillima Letters a Perfect Picture of his Various Moods.

George Hamlin Fitch, who reviews books for the S. F. Chronicle, has the following to say about Robert Louis Stevenson and his Vaillima letters, which have just been published:

The literary year that has just ended saw the death of the greatest master of style who used the English tongue, the creator of a world of romance that will never die. Since Stevenson's eager life was quenched in night in far-off Samoa, we have had many estimates of his work and of his influence by divers hands, but the article which seems to me to reflect most perfectly the impression that Stevenson makes upon a sensitive mind was contributed by Mrs. Schuyler Van Kinsella to the November Century. She saw Stevenson only once for a single hour on a gloomy day in a dismal chamber of a New York hotel; but the man, who was in bed, propped up on pillows, was so bright-eyed, alert and intensely alive that she forgot he was an invalid and left him with a profound admiration for the courage that triumphed over bodily ills and made a jest of pain and weariness. The result of a careful study of Stevenson's books, she says with truth, is to make a writer ashamed of any but his best work. Stevenson spent such infinite pains to do the best that was in him that those who come within the circle of his friendship cannot escape the contagious influence of his literary enthusiasm. This and the loyal admiration of thousands who have no gifts of speech seem to me to be the immortality that would best suit the man who was the best loved of any writer of his time.

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